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Montana Arts Council Press Release

For Immediate Release

Contacts: Arlynn Fishbaugh, Executive Director, Montana Arts Council, 406-444-6546, afishbaugh@mt.gov or Cinda Holt, Business Development Specialist, 406-777-0090, cholt@montana.com

Press Release Title: Montana Arts Council Awards Federal Economic Stimulus Funding

Thirteen arts organizations from across Montana have been awarded American Recovery and Reinvestment in the Arts (ARRA) funding from the Montana Arts Council (MAC), made possible through the National Endowment for the Arts' federal economic stimulus funding.

The arts council granted \$241,000 in ARRA funding, putting Montanans to work in the arts. These one-year grants are used for positions that are critical to organizations' artistic missions and which are in jeopardy or have been reduced or eliminated as a result of the current economic climate. Funding may also be used to pay fees for previously engaged artists and/or other independent contractors to maintain the period during which they would have been engaged were it not for the economic climate.

The total work force impact of this funding for Montana will help restore 193 contracted personnel and partially restore 19 positions equaling 8.6 full-time equivalent (FTE) employees.

A five-person panel comprised of members of the Montana Arts Council, the Montana Legislature and the former director of a rural art center made decisions based on the strength of each application, and then added an additional filter to ensure there was broad outreach, geographic diversity, a variety of types of arts represented, and a range of organizational sizes represented. The following organizations were granted funds and have local and regional impact:

Butte Center for the Performing Arts: \$24,717, which will partially restore both the artistic and managing director position salaries. This funding also indirectly helps BCPA to retain four other part-time positions within the organization.

Custer County Art and Heritage Center, Miles City: \$25,000, which will partially restore both the education director and the administrative assistant salaries. This funding will directly impact the center's ability to continue a high-level of programming, including their assistance in after-school programming, care facilities and group homes.

Hockaday Museum of Art, Kalispell: \$19,535, which will partially restore funding to hire an Executive Director/Curator position (currently vacant) and allow the Interim Director to return to her former staff position within the organization which is also currently not filled. This funding will directly impact the Hockaday's ability to maintain their high level of programming within the community.

Intermountain Opera Association, Bozeman: \$ 21,700, which will partially restore the salaries for the executive director and the marketing director. This funding will also allow them to continue hiring all support positions associated with the productions: musicians, guest artists, stage crew and production personnel.

Museum of the Plains Indian, Browning: \$5,400, which will partially restore the salary for its executive director. This funding will also allow the organization to maintain a strong activity level, which is crucial for federal appropriations negotiations.

Powell County Museum and Arts Foundation, Deer Lodge: \$24,979, which will fully restore the salary for the collections manager and partially restore the salaries for three part-time receptionists. This funding will also help them to retain staff for oversight, maintenance and housekeeping for the facility.

Rimrock Opera, Billings: \$24,000, which will fully restore the salary for the general director, its only fulltime paid employee. This funding will allow them to redirect resources to maintain programming, educational outreach and to remain in Yellowstone County.

Yellowstone Ballet Company, Livingston: \$5,000, which will partially restore the salary for the artistic director and the composer. This funding will directly impact their ability to keep a high level of programming for the coming season.

Organizations with state-wide impact that receiving funding:

Art Mobile: \$24,992, which will partially restore the salary for the executive director and fully restore the salary for the teaching artist. This funding will allow this visual arts education organization to continue to serve schools all across Montana, in nearly all 56 counties.

Humanities Montana, based in Missoula: \$14,906, which will fully restore one part-time employee and 75 writers' contracts and allow Humanities Montana to continue producing the Montana Festival of the Book, which has significant local economic impact.

Montana Performing Arts Consortium, based in Bozeman: \$15,000, which will partially restore contracts for 84 performing artist, three stage and sound managers, and two administrative

positions. This funding directly benefits rural communities across Montana that bring in performing artists on tour for their local performance season. A partial list of these communities include Fort Benton, Hobson, Lincoln, Ronan, Hamilton, Gardiner, Glasgow, Malta, Chinook, Havre, Sidney and others.

Writer's Voice, based in Billings: \$22,500, which will partially restore the director's position, fully restore contracts for eight artists for TumbleWords, and also partially restore contracts for 18 more artists. This funding will help Writer's Voice to continue offering touring writers programs to southeastern Montana.

VSA arts (Very Special Arts) of Montana, based in Missoula: \$13,271, which will partially restore the position of executive director and contracts for two teaching artists. This funding will directly impact VSA arts' ability to provide services across Montana for children and adults with disabilities, providing strong advocacy that shows the value and impact of the arts on the learning and development of social and job skills of participants.

Executive Director of the arts council Arni Fishbaugh says, "Montana has a national reputation as being 'The Land of Creativity.' The arts have a significant impact on Montana's economy. In 2003, the Montana Arts Council sponsored a study of the tax-exempt arts organizations throughout the state which showed an economic impact of \$83 million per year, producing close to 2,000 full-time jobs annually. In fact, Montana's non-profit arts organizations, as an economic sector, have a greater employment impact than one-quarter of the state's top 100 industries.

"Adding to that is the substantial economic impact provided by individual artists as well. In a study conducted by MSU Billings in 2005, Montana's individual artists had an economic impact in the state of nearly one quarter billion dollars in 2004. One out of every 78 people in Montana's labor market is a working artist, according to the U.S. Census and the number of artists as a percentage of the total state workforce grew three times faster than the regular labor force between 1970 and 2000.

"These arts jobs may not be sporting hard hats, like many of the jobs supported by other federal economic stimulus funding, but they are just as important, hard at work helping communities attract business, providing innovation and creativity that makes Montana the greatest place to work and play, and live and learn."